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# Access to land in Ethiopia

The impact of land laws, industrial development, villagization  
and land-grab in rural areas

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UTVK02 Bachelor thesis in Development Studies  
Spring 2014  
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## Abstract

The objective of this thesis is to examine rural populations' access to land in Ethiopia, in the light of land regulations and different obstacles. Using a qualitative research design, based on a literature study, the following topics will be discussed; land regulation, state-led industrial development, villagization programme and land-grab. In conclusion, the regulatory framework forbids locals to sell and exchange land and there are restrictions on land rental and leasing contracts. Land-grab is believed to cover 4 million hectares which represent 10 percent of Ethiopia's total agricultural area. In order to use land for state-led industrial development and foreign large-scale land investments, the state has removed locals from different areas, using methods such as expropriation, redistribution of land and forceful removal through the villagization program. No legal framework protects locals from the state's processes. As areas used for industrial development and foreign large-scale land investments expand, local people loose access to land. As a result, conflicts and violence have erupted between locals' and actors' involved in land-grab.

**Word count** 12 633

## Keywords

Ethiopia, rural, development, villagization, land-grab, Gambella, Omo valley



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# 1 Introduction

Ethiopia has an extensive poverty and the majority of the population depend on access to land (DESA, 2009). Poverty is most concentrated in rural areas and agriculture is often of key importance (DFID, 2004). The Ethiopian economy is rooted in agriculture and approximately 85 percent of the total employment, is located in the agricultural sector (CountryWatch, 2013). Land in rural areas has a multifunctional role as it is a source of income and plays a significant role in providing food (DESA, 2009). An increasing concern for locals is the rising land shortages and the lack of income opportunities (Gerben-Leenes et al. 2012). There are also several obstacles which could have a significant impact on local people's access to land.

One of the difficulties of accessing land could be because the Ethiopian Constitution concludes that all land is owned by the State (HRW, 2012a). As a result the state holds the power to distribute and exclude people from using land (Sjöstedt, 2008). Consequently, locals, who are dependent on access to land, could be significantly affected by the Ethiopian land legislation. Circumstances that also can affect access to land, is the state-led development model, in which the state prioritize economic growth and industrial development (Bonda, 2011). Major industrial project's are currently taking place in Omo valley, where Africa's highest dam, Gibe III hydropower project, will be constructed (USAID, 2009). This project also includes the building of irrigation canals, sugar processing factories, road infrastructure and 100,000 hectares of land for commercial agriculture (HRW, 2012c). The state's industrial projects require extensive areas of land, which could affect those locals' living in the project area. To enhance economic growth the state has made access to land at low rates available to foreign land investors (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014). The foreign land investments have been described by scholars as "land-grab" (Gasparatos and Stromberg, 2012). Prior to the 2000s, farming in Ethiopia, was largely encompassed by small-scale farmers. However, significantly more land is made available for land-grab with large-scale agricultural production (Baumgartner, 2013). Land-grab involves the use of natural resources and usually acts as a solution to satisfy the need for food in foreign countries, without sharing benefits with locals where the land-grab takes place. Land-grab is also often associated with lack of consideration for social implications (Riddell, 2013), displacement and dispossession of local populations (Scoones, 2009). Ethiopia has attracted significant land investments from Saudi Arabia (Woertz, 2013), Western Europe, North America, as well as the emerging economies in Middle East and South Asia (Baumgartner, 2013). By now Ethiopia is one of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa where land-grab has increased most in past decades (Gasparatos and Stromberg, 2012). Since land-grab usually involves substantial areas of agricultural land, locals' access to land can be negatively affected. At the same time the state has launched a villagization program, which has the official objective of improving locals living conditions. This program has been particularly active in the region Gambella. However, it is claimed to be a measure designed to take land used by locals, in favour of land investments by large-scale capital (HRW, 2012a). Because the country has an extensive poverty and the majority of the population are dependent on land, the obstacles described above could result in devastating consequences for locals' income and food supply.

## **1.1 Research Questions and Objectives**

Since Ethiopia has an extensive poverty and the majority of the population are dependent on land, this thesis will examine the obstacles that could affect locals' access and use of land. The objective of this study is to reflect locals' access to land and its relations to the state and foreign interests. The Ethiopian constitution concludes that all land is owned by the state (HRW, 2012a), which puts the state in power to include or exclude anyone from using an area of land (Sjöstedt, 2008). The first research question will examine the Ethiopian land law's impact on locals' access and use of land.

As of 2001, the Ethiopian state has been committed to the state-led development model, which prioritizes economic growth and industrial development, through state interventions (Bonda, 2011). One concern is that the expansion of state-led industrial development, which requires extensive areas of land, might act as an obstacle for locals' to access land for living or agriculture. For that reason, the second research question will look at the extensive industrial projects impact on locals' access to land, with particular attention to the development taking place in Omo Valley. This case can show some among the possible scenarios between state-led development and locals' access to land.

Additionally, since the state applied liberal tax arrangements, an increase in foreign land investments by large-scale capital have occurred (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014). As land-grab usually involves substantial areas of land (Scoones, 2009), it could act as an obstacle for locals access to land. The third research question will examine the trend of land-grab in Ethiopia, its expansion in rural areas and the phenomenon's impact on locals' access to land. An element included in the third section is to examine the state's involvement in land-grab and the state-run program called villagization. The program has the official objective to improve locals living conditions, although it has been claimed to be a measure designed to clear land from locals, in favour of land investments by foreign capital (HRW, 2012a).

The research questions for this study are therefore:

1. What impact does the Ethiopian land regulation have on locals' access to land?
2. How does the state-led industrial development project in Omo valley affect locals' access to land?
3. How does the villagization program and land-grab affect locals' access to land?

In order to answer these questions, the thesis is structured as follows. Chapter two addresses the theoretical approaches and will describe why locals' access to land is important from a development perspective. This section also highlights the key concepts in the thesis, such as land-grabbing. The state-led development model will be discussed in order to bring an understanding of the state's approach towards industrial development and foreign investments in land. The third chapter contains methodology and a discussion about the material used. Chapter four will illustrate the empirical and historical connection of villagization programs. This information will give an idea of how the state has used such programs in the past, as well as the program's objectives and outcomes in rural areas. Thereafter, the contemporary program's impact on rural people's access to land will be explored. This chapter will seek to answer the research questions. The sixth chapter contains a discussion of the thesis findings and conclusions.

# 2 Theoretical and Empirical Context of Analysis

This chapter will address the theoretical and empirical context of the analysis. As the research questions revolve around locals' access to land, this section seeks to demonstrate the importance of land in rural areas. Development theory and development strategies will be used to shed light on the connection between land, poverty reduction and food security. This section also highlights key aspects in the development debate, such as small-scale and large-scale agriculture. This also involves the global aspects that could affect rural land access, including land-grabbing, which is a recurrent phenomenon which, therefore, will be explained. The state manages the land regulation, industrial development projects and conditions for foreign investments in land. In order to bring an understanding of how the state influence local populations' access to land, the state-led development model will be discussed.

## 2.1 Development Theory

Development Studies is an interdisciplinary field where thoughts revolve around what constitutes development. Development theory is found mainly in the academic literature and is described by Potter et al (2008), as a set of claims of how development has occurred throughout history and / or could possibly occur in the future. A widespread belief is that the process of development results in economic growth and national progress. Such process should also lead to a sustainable growth pattern and the supply of basic daily requirements such as food, housing, education and health care. The concept of development is often associated with Western ideas and ideals. During the Enlightenment, parts of the world which were not adapted to the West's ideals were considered to be "undeveloped". Since then, numerous terms have been adopted to distinguish countries at different stages of progress. Those that lack advancement have been classified as developing country, less advanced countries, underdeveloped countries, less economically developed countries and poor nations (Potter et al. 2008). Initially development theory and the strategies to achieve development, revolved around the promotion of economic growth. In the 1940s, following World War II, the concept of development became increasingly utilized. The term "underdeveloped areas" were used to describe areas in need of the western world's assistance in order to boost development. The 1950s-1960s was an era of modernization and development was synonymous with economic growth. To estimate a country's progress, economic terms such as GNP (Gross National Product), was often applied (Potter et al. 2008). Western development economists did not consider agriculture to be an important element for economic growth. Instead, investments in the industrial sector were thought to lead to rapid economic growth (Staatz and Eicher, 1998). The perception that money invested in urban development were thought to spread to rural areas, without any specific plan for how this would actually happen (Potter et al. 2008). Although some agricultural economists considered that more attention should be on agriculture and argued that instead of a passive role, agriculture could contribute to employment opportunities, food to the expanding industrial sector and the domestic market (Staatz and Eicher,

1998). The narrow focus on economic growth was increasingly criticized with arguments that a country's development must be measured in a wider context where other elements, such as freedom, is taken into account (Potter et al. 2008). During the 1970s, western development economists expanded the approach to development and begun to include income distribution, employment and nutrition as well as extended the empirical research on the rural economy. 1980s - 1990s was a period of focus on economic policy reforms, institutional changes and increased attention on food and environmental sustainability (Staatz and Eicher, 1998). The approach towards development projects on a smaller scale became more common. Aspects of the development process such as ethnic and cultural dimensions became increasingly integrated and consideration was given to social factors and political freedom. People's skills, peasant's thoughts as well as their objectives were taken into consideration in the development process (Potter et al. 2008). The approach towards agriculture also shifted during this period (Staatz and Eicher, 1998). This change of view is still influencing the approach to development and strategies for development (Potter et al. 2008). Although, some critics still consider development theory to be Eurocentric as the objectives and strategies has been shaped by Western ideas. Many of those countries lacking advancement have received aid from more advanced or "developed countries". The aid has been intended to enhance development, however, this form of assistance has been criticised by alternative/populist approaches. This line of thinking have argued that people in developing countries have no possibility to express themselves against the much more influenced West and emphasizes that development assistance rather put poor countries in a position, where they depend on wealthier countries. Development assistance also contributes to preserve poor countries' economic, social, political and cultural subordination. As statistics indicate that large parts of the world is developing and conditions improve, advocates for development argue that development aid and its strategies should proceed. However, opponents, the so-called "anti-development", post-development, argue that the gap between rich and poor has increased over the last 30-40 years. Inequalities and poor conditions are in some parts of the world rising. Therefore, opponents argue that strategies for development have never been successful and will not work in practice (Potter et al. 2008).

## 2.2 Development Strategies in Agriculture

A large proportion of developing countries notably in sub-Saharan Africa, continue to struggle with hunger and poverty. Agriculture is also a significant part in the majority of the developing countries' economies. Poverty is particularly prevalent among landless people and ethnic minorities, who generally are living in peripheral rural areas. In essence, poverty is most concentrated in rural areas and agriculture is often of key importance for rural livelihoods. Development strategies to combat poverty have during the past half century, been associated with agricultural performance. Countries with the largest increase in agricultural productivity, have also demonstrated the highest rate of poverty reduction (DFID, 2004). However, as the agricultural productivity continues to expand, the production becomes increasingly internationalized and capital intensive. Rural farmers have more difficulties gaining access to markets (DFID, 2004), which has a significant impact on locals (Potter et al. 2008). The expanding world trade can imply possibilities for rural poor, which will be in low-paid jobs, rather than as farmers in the agricultural sector (DFID, 2004). Concerns have been raised regarding governments becoming increasingly separated from influencing rural development, while

farmers become more tied up to employment contracts that are unfair (Potter et al. 2008). Actors, such as national and international NGOs, have expressed their concern of large-scale industrial agriculture, especially foreign, taking place in developing countries. They argue that poor countries are rather in need of international support which can contribute to increase farm activity on local levels (Brown, 2013).

An ongoing debate among researchers, development agencies and policy makers involve whether or not, agricultural productivity can increase in those areas where it is most needed, and if small-scale agriculture can combat poverty in rural areas (DFID, 2004). The arguments revolve around small-scale and large-scale farming and are divided into two approaches; the small-scale optimists and the small-scale pessimists. Those that favour small-scale farming underline the need for greater investment in agriculture and the establishment of an institution, which supports and encourages development in small-scale agriculture. The focus is on staple food crops consumed by the poor and traded locally, rather than on the international market (DFID, 2004). The small-scale pessimists stress the importance of focusing on global markets for agricultural products. They argue that commercial production on large farms for non-staple cash crops should be encouraged. They also believe that the non-agricultural sector will provide most job opportunities for the rural poor. In this perspective it is essential that processed and high quality products from developing countries gain access to the developed countries markets. This view also state that rural poor need improved mobility, so they are able to move to growth areas where they occur (DFID, 2004). Development experts need to determine what role the small-scale agriculture can have in the future and if the productivity is able to increase where it is most needed (DFID, 2004).

A growing concern is how to satisfy the increasing need for food in the world. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), has reported that food production must be doubled by year 2050, in order to satisfy the growing population's food requirement (FAO, 2009). The majority of the population increase will occur in developing countries, where rural poverty and hunger already is widespread (FAO, 2009). Food security might also be affected by the increasing global scarcity of natural assets (IFPRI, 2012). Those countries lacking land and irrigation are increasingly interconnected with land-grabbing (Gerbens-Leenes et al. 2012). Additionally, land-grabbing is most common to take place in countries with a high level of hunger and where the people, as well as the national income, are very dependent on agriculture (IFPRI, 2012). Ethiopia is one of those countries as its economy is rooted in agriculture, with approximately 85 percent of the total employment situated in the agricultural sector (CountryWatch, 2013). However, the country has a weak food security level and receives large international investments for staple production (Warner et al. 2013) and the United Nations World Food Programme assists with food aid (Gerbens-Leenes et al. 2012). In statistics from FAO (2013) the number of undernourished people 2011–2013, was 32.1 million, which represents 37.1% of the population (FAO, 2013). Under nourishment is defined by FAO as:

“A state, lasting for at least one year of inability to acquire enough food, defined as a level of food intake insufficient to meet dietary energy requirements” (FAO, 2013 p.50)

Ethiopia is also struggling with widespread poverty and land in rural areas plays a significant role in food security (DESA, 2009). As of 2001, the Ethiopian state has been focused on state-led development (Bonda, 2011), in which economic growth is a key element (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014). The state has introduced generous investment conditions, which are particularly beneficial for

investors involved in land-grabbing (Oakland Institute, 2013). Since then, farming in Ethiopia has gone from small-scale agricultural production, to become more involved with large-scale land investments by transnational corporations, which focus on large-scale agricultural production (Baumgartner, 2013). This large-scale production is in need of hundreds of thousands of hectares of land. These huge projects have been questioned since it is not likely to produce effectively over the whole area in a short time (Baumgartner, 2013). The majority of large-scale investment in Ethiopia involves agricultural companies with production for export, which won't contribute to feeding the undernourished in rural areas (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014). The state has argued that the foreign land agricultural production will contribute to long-term food security in Ethiopia, since the technology will be transferred to small-scale agriculture (Oakland Institute, 2013). In what way such transfer will be implemented has not yet been clarified. Moreover, it remains to see whether peasants are able to obtain access to land for small-scale agricultural production.

## **2.3 The State-led Development Model**

In the beginning of the 1980s, a market based economy was considered to be the most efficient method in order to enhance economic growth (Bonda, 2011). Led by the IMF and the World Bank, several countries embraced the neo-liberal economic policies. One of the conditions in the neo-liberal approach was for aid receiving countries to adopt to structural adjustment programs. As Ethiopia was one of the aid receiving countries, they would have to adapt to those conditions. However, the Ethiopian state condemned the conditions and sought other alternatives to Neo-liberalism (Bonda, 2011). In the mid-1990's, rapid economic growth was noticed in East Asia, with the so called "Asian Tigers" in the lead. The state involvement in those economic successful countries, such as Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan, is thought to be a crucial factor for the economic success. In 2001, inspired by the economic success of East Asia, the Ethiopian state announced its commitment to the state-led development model. The Ethiopian Prime Minister at the time, Meles Zenawi, said to have been inspired by the Korean and Taiwanese strategies and experiences of rural development. The strategies involved carrying out development through state interventions (Bonda, 2011), in which economic growth was a key element (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014).

The underlying structure of the state-led model, stresses the importance of applying an effective economic policy (Bonda, 2011). Leftwich (1995), note that besides the objective of an efficient financial policy, the characteristics of the state-led model are to secure control and create a subordinated civil society. The state regards itself as an authority figure (Bonda, 2011), and its dominant position is rooted in its commitment to secure the hegemony of the state (Leftwich, 1995). The political leadership in Ethiopia has reduced the possibilities for political diversity and excluded rivals. Also public debates have been left out from all major political decisions (Bonda, 2011).

Following the announcement of the state-led model, the state has published a five year plan, "The Growth and Transformation Plan". This plan includes the ambition to improve the country's economy between years 2010 to 2015. This plan of action has been described as "state-led capitalism" (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014). Significant industrial development projects' are now taking place (Ambaye, 2013). State-led industrial projects have required access to extensive areas of land in order to build sugar processing factories, road infrastructure, irrigation canals and commercial agriculture

(HRW, 2012c). A project which the state describes as a significant step towards modernizing Ethiopia is the construction of Africa's highest dam in Omo Valley (USAID, 2009). This project will expand over an area which is used by indigenous pastoral communities (HRW, 2012c). However, the project is progressing and pastoralism is described to be unsustainable and that focus must be on commercial cultivation and mechanized agriculture (USAID, 2009). The Ethiopian state has also responded to the global hunt for land, by opening up for a more investment friendly environment for foreign investors (Gasparatos and Stromberg, 2012). The state has now applied favourable arrangements such as five years of tax exemption (Brown, 2013) and more than 4 million hectares have been leased to foreign investors, also described as land-grab deals (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014).

This section has attempted to show how the state's adaptation to the state-led development model, emphasizes focus of economic and industrial development. Both the state's projects and the increase of large-scale land investments will need access to land. How this is going affect the rural population's access to land will be discussed in chapter four.

## **2.4 Land-grabbing and Large-scale land investments**

Land-grab is a politically charged expression which symbolizes a complex phenomenon. The term was initially used by radical social movements and their sympathizers, but has become an expression used in media, academic writings and by activists (Borras and Franco, 2012). Warner, Sebastian and Empinotti argue that the divergence of the land grab discourse requires a careful contextual assessment of the different perceptions (Warner et al. 2013). Furthermore, Borras and Franco argue that the emerging literature regarding land grab, is often deficient in the explanation of the purpose of investigation and analysis (Borras and Franco, 2012). In academic writings and popular science the expression sometimes springs from neo-colonial resonance (Warner et al. 2013). The term emphasizes a time in the past when states from the North restrained commons, mainly land and water, while farmers and indigenous people from the south were deprived assets and possessions. This approach emphasises that land investments have the potential to push poor countries into a new cycle of deprivation and neo-colonization. This perspective seeks to draw attention, as well as to motivate political action, concerning the ongoing land deals (Borras and Franco, 2012).

The Neo-Marxist approach, which is closely linked to dependency and world system theories, also connect land grab to the neo-colonial discourse. World systems theory classifies economies into groups of the global core, the semi-periphery, and periphery. The economies in the core extract the natural resources from those in the periphery. Usually Southern elites in the periphery are described to sell natural resources, for private gaining, to foreign investors from the core (Warner et al. 2013). The Neo-Marxist approach emphasize the competition between imperial powers that extract resources for their own benefit and stress the understanding of global relations as economic exploitation. That the bourgeois in the periphery adapt to the interests of the core is an idea that has remained influential for a long time. However, since the beginning of the 2000's it has become more difficult categorize economies into hierarchically order. As economies in the periphery, such as Brazil, Russia, India and China, experience a boom, the power balance changes in the battle for African resources (Warner et al. 2013).

The debated subject of land investments have also moved into development streams, where the phrase "Large-scale land investments" was recently introduced. This is supposedly a depoliticized term, which has been applied by international institutions and agencies (Borras and Franco, 2012). This expression emphasize the size of the land deal, but not power relations. Another term that refers to the increase of commercial land deals in recent years is "Global land grab". This expression mostly relate to large-scale food and bio fuel production and export. The term "Global land grab" is increasingly used by those who see the phenomenon as a "pro-poor" strategy (Borras and Franco, 2012). As the production becomes increasingly internationalized and capital intensive, rural poor could find opportunities in low-paid jobs, rather than as farmers in the agricultural sector (DFID, 2004). However, there is reason to believe that the underlying motive of "pro-poor" strategies is the possibility to further expand the capitalist agricultural industry (Borras and Franco, 2012). As mentioned earlier, the term land-grab is a politically charged expression with a variety of interpretations. In this study, land-grab is defined as land purchased or leased in Ethiopia by foreign investors or agribusiness companies. Generally, land-grab is functioning as a solution to increase food security in foreign countries, without sharing the benefits with the population in the country that provides the land (Riddell, 2013). Land-grab can involve the use of natural resources and water consumption that negatively affect locals and the surrounding areas; the lack of consideration for social, economic and environmental implications (Riddell, 2013), and cause displacement of local people and dispossession (Scoones, 2009). One of the concerns regarding land-grab is that actors engaged in land-grab do not need to deal with problems that may occur, such as environmental degradation, social effects and labour exploitation (Brown, 2013). Instead, these actors can invest, protect and decrease pressure on the natural resources in their own country. In this perspective land-grab is in fact a process which externalise land and water scarcity to poor countries (Brown, 2013). Research indicates that large land investors tend to accumulate both economic and political power. As a result investors can secure access to scarce resources (Baumgartner, 2013). Actors involved in land-grab can be considered to be participants in a global power struggle, to control the world's land and water resources (Brown, 2013). Moreover, the power lay with those who are able to secure access to the resources (Warner et al. 2013).

Different actors have sought to thoroughly examine the effect of land-grab and the activity has been questioned by national and international NGOs (Brown, 2013). Counter arguments from these organisations mainly concern the fact that the world is in no need of industrial farming, placed in poor countries, such as Ethiopia. They argue that poor countries are rather in need of international support which can contribute to increase farm activity on local levels (Brown, 2013). Land -grab has also gained attention from agencies such as the World Bank and United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization. These, along with several other authorities have created a number of recommendations for how large-scale land investments should be conducted. The problem is that there is no unit in place that can verify different actors' compliance with the guidelines (Brown, 2013). As capitalist pressure grow the value of land and resources in Africa increase (Gerbens-Leenes et al. 2012). The Ethiopian state has responded to the increasing interest in land by opening up for a more investment friendly environment for land-grab (Gasparatos and Stromberg, 2012).

### 3 Methodology

In order to achieve the objective of investigating locals' access to land and its obstacles, a qualitative research design, based on a literature study has been applied. Why this approach is particularly beneficial for this study is due to the selected research question. As pointed out by Brockington and Sullivan (2003), qualitative research can explore issues such as, in what way social interaction and conditions are influenced by different circumstances. A qualitative research approach can also be applied when one explores the importance of people's worlds and the causes of individual behaviours (Brockington and Sullivan, 2003). My interpretation of Brockington and Sullivan's description of qualitative research is that it also seeks to understand the world through interacting and interpreting acts and perceptions of global powers. Qualitative methods can be used to get an insight in the world and can be applied for research of both well known and unfamiliar groups and locations (Brockington and Sullivan, 2003). Thereby, implementing a qualitative approach was considered most suitable for emphasizing local people's access to land and to explore the obstacles, caused by the state and global powers.

The approach of this study was to apply a literature review and start analyzing literature regarding land rights in Ethiopia, with a focus on rural areas. When applying a literature review, existing research is used in order to increase the knowledge of a chosen study area (Race, 2008). Analyzing others' arguments and research results', can also be seen as a tool for testing a research question, a hypothesis (Race, 2008), or to put the study into a context (Desai and Potter, 2006). The literature revealed that the State exercise control over individuals' access to land. As I chose to look at how the state motivates their control of land, some literature dealt with the state's adoption of the "state-led development model". While examining this model it became more clear what processes that affect local peoples' access to land. Thereby, the study came to focus on the impact of industrial development, the villagization program and land-grab. Those concepts and phenomena have been interpreted, in order to find out how they are interrelated and in what way they are connected to locals' land access.

I have used scholarly articles, published in academic journals, in topics such as development and land investments for agriculture production in the global south. Reports from FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) and IFPRI (International Food Policy Research Institute) regarding global food needs and under nutrition in Ethiopia. I found extensive use of working papers published by the World Bank, DESA (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs), as well as dissertations which deal specifically with land ownership in Ethiopia. Using the most recent literature has been prioritized in order to cover the ongoing debates.

The terms and phenomena's encountered in this literature study has consisted of historical perspectives and different models of explanations, which at times appeared impossible to make space for in the study. As Race (2008) has pointed out, the key is to see the concept's complexity and then emphasize what aspects the literature study should handle. However, one of the difficulties has been to choose what aspects to focus on, especially as new questions and approaches are identified during the data analysis. For example, in this study land-grab is described as a disputed and theoretically questioned concept. This discussion could have been expanded. Land-grab is also a phenomenon which has been connected to a greater need for land and expanding large-scale agricultural production.

This context has been more incorporated in the study to demonstrate how local populations' access to land, is influenced by global powers, which is the focus of the study.

Various problems with the literature have been encountered during the process. The conditions a land-grab agreement contains, more specifically, are generally not accessible to the public. It is difficult to gain access to reliable information from governmental sources, regarding land-grab contracts as well as the execution, outcome and the status of the villagization program. This is also discussed by Baumgartner, who points out that the lack of reliable data makes it hard to grasp the scale of the phenomenon thus creating limitations in the research. Also, little research has been given to study the impact of land-grab on micro and meso levels (Baumgartner, 2013). As pointed out by Race (2008), existing research is used in a literature review, in order to increase the knowledge of a chosen study area. However, only a few sources were found to include descriptions of the activity, such as villagization, taking place in local areas in Ethiopia. Those sources have been of paramount importance in order to answer the research questions. One of the risks using material prepared by other scholars is that it has been formed by the researchers own values and therefore influenced the research design (Desai and Potter, 2006). A critical review was required in order to determine the reliability of those sources describing local people's observations and interviews. The sources used are non-governmental organisations, which aim to increase awareness of land struggles that are taking place in Ethiopia. Human Rights Watch is an independent, international organization that works with local and international actors in civil society. Interviews and locals observations are included in the HRW's reports, providing a comprehensive picture of locals' access to land. Human Rights Watch has also appeared as a reference in several academic writings about land-grab (HRW, 2012a). Another important source was Cultural Survival Inc, which is a non-profit, human rights organization that has worked with Indigenous communities for over forty years, which focus on defending lands and cultures (Cultural Survival Inc). Both of these sources revealed that indigenous peoples' are particularly at risk of loosing access to land.

### **3.1 Delimitations of the study**

This thesis covers land accessibility in rural areas and how this is threatened by state-led development projects, land-grab and villagization. In order to include access to land in peri-urban and urban areas, a more extensive research would be required. The geographical area has been delimited so that the analysis only focuses on land in rural areas.

# 4 Access to land and State Regulation, Industrial Development, Villagization & Large-scale Investment in Land

## 4.1 Land regulation and local people's access to land

In this chapter I will seek to answer the first research question "What impact does the Ethiopian land regulation have on local people's access to land?". In order to do so, I will discuss the framework of land rights' in rural areas and what requirements locals' must fulfil in order to utilize land.

Land in rural areas of Ethiopia fulfils a number of social functions. It is a bearer of social and cultural values since it's used as settlement and symbolic and ritual use, such as burial sites (Sjöstedt, 2008). Land is also associated with the well-being of the household and the social standing in the community. Landowners are treated with greater respect and often feel a stronger sense of identity within the community. The status of a land owner, in turn, increases influence in local politics (DESA, 2009). Land in rural areas is also considered to be a crucial asset, especially considering that the majority of the population is employed in the agricultural sector (CountryWatch, 2013), and depend on land in order to make an income (Bluffstone et al. 2008). Land also plays a significant role in providing food (DESA, 2009).

In the early 1990's The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), seized political power and has remained in power ever since (Deininger et al. 2007). The Ethiopian constitution concludes that all land is property of the state (HRW, 2012a). Residents in rural areas, in need of land for farming, have the right to get access to agricultural land without a cost (Deininger et al. 2003). The waiting list for land access is usually long and it takes time before the request is being processed (Ambaye, 2013). Additionally, land shortage has become an increasing concern in Ethiopia. Most exposed are the areas in the highlands where the population has increased. Because of this, it is more difficult to pursue the right for access to agricultural land (Bezu and Holden, 2013).

Locals can have "holding right's", which specify an individual's right to utilise an area of land (Ambaye, 2013). However, this is not legally recognized land ownership, hence usage is strictly limited. In order to retain the "holding right's", one requirement is that the land must be utilized. If the land is left unused for over three years, the land can be redistributed by the authority. As a result the people tend to stay on the land due to fear of losing it (Ambaye, 2013). Even if land is used, a large number of residents have relocated against their will, in favour of the state's land redistribution (Sjöstedt, 2008). Another requirement revolves around the total amount of income earned outside of farm activity. Any activity outside the agricultural sector, which entails earnings over a certain limit, will put locals' at risk of losing access to the land. Additionally, since the 1990's, the state has prohibited the population to sell land and there are also restrictions on land rental and leasing contracts (Ambaye, 2013). As a result, locals have very few options remaining when the need for land increase. Usually, parents try to maintain their land in order to transfer parts of it to their children, when the need occurs (Bezu and Holden, 2013). One can access land through inheritance from parents or other relatives, although restrictions also apply for inheritance of land. Only members of the family, without

any other income besides from the land, may take advantage of a land inheritance (Ambaye, 2013). Besides from that, the parents or relatives who leave the heritage will determine who should have access to the land, traditionally land is inherited by the men (Bezu and Holden, 2013).

People in rural areas risk losing access to land through expropriation. FAO (1997) describe expropriation as an extreme form of political action, in which national assets are confiscated. In 2005 the Ethiopian state published, "Federal democratic republic of Ethiopia Expropriation Proclamation", which sets the policies for expropriation. The proclamation concludes that expropriation takes place when land can be used for "public purposes":

"public purpose" means the use of land [ - - - ] in order to ensure the interest of the peoples to acquire direct or indirect benefits from the use of the land and to consolidate sustainable socio-economic development; (FDRE, 2005, p.25)

The meaning of "public purpose" and the benefits this should include, is not specified in the proclamation. This allows the government to use its expropriation power without restriction and regardless of its objective. Using public purposes, makes it possible for various actors to argue that the land can be used in a better more beneficial manner including for commercial use. Local people risk losing access to land because someone with better financial resources can claim their land for better use (Ambaye, 2013).

According to the proclamation, the land holder in rural areas should be compensated for expropriation (FDRE, 2005). The value of the land is excluded from the compensation (Ambaye, 2013) and is based on the property situated on the land and the cost of replacing such property (FDRE, 2005). Once the valuation is done, the holder should be notified in writing concluding when the land has to be vacated and the amount of compensation to be paid (FDRE, 2005). Any landholder who receives an expropriation notice must hand over the land within 90 days from the date of payment of compensation (FDRE, 2005). If the land does not have crops on it, the time may be lowered to 30 days (Ambaye, 2013). The execution of an expropriation may not be delayed due to a complaint regarding the amount of compensation. As stated in the proclamation, if the holder refuses to leave, the authority may use police force to takeover the land (FDRE, 2005).

A research conducted by Ambaye (2013) in the Amhara region, following expropriation due to a dam project, indicates that locals did not receive any written notice. In this case, neither the requirement of compensation was correctly met. Compensation was paid one year after the expropriation and the amount was spread over several payments. Also, the compensation for the damage caused by the expropriation for public benefit, is not enough for locals to regain the same possibilities for income prior to expropriation. Ambaye (2013) observes that despite the fact that the proclamation is intended to set guidelines for expropriation, it does not cover whether local people who are about to lose access to land, should be consulted prior to the expropriation. Furthermore, it does not contain any instructions towards locals resettlement to a different area or if they should get access to another plot of land (Ambaye, 2013).

Because of the land regulation, people do not know for how long they will have access to a plot of land (Bluffstone et al. 2008). If they are forced to leave, they risk not getting compensated for the investments made in fixed assets, thus locals tend to limit their investments to a minimum (Anseeuw et al. 2013). A research conducted in the region Amhara indicate that the risk of loosing access to land also influence locals choice of crops. The research show that cultivated trees, especially eucalyptus

trees, has a key role in the households. Because of the risk of loosing access to land, locals choose Eucalyptus trees as they grow fast and can be harvested quickly, in case they loose access to the land. The tree has spread rapidly and is now the most important source of firewood and building materials. An investment in a fast-growing tree, such as eucalyptus, is wise given locals' insecure land access and the mortality risk of animals and other crops. This trend may however have taken place to the disadvantage of other tree species which could be more favourable. However, the return takes relatively longer time, which is a high risk for farmers. Strengthening the land rights is likely to encourage the growing of other species (Bluffstone et al. 2008).

According to Ambaye (2013) the state has faced criticism for the expropriation as well as the ill-treatment of minorities. Regional offices have throughout the country misused the land regulation by deciding who is allowed access to land, based on "ethnicity" or "nativity". These requirements' have stopped people, especially minorities, from moving from one area to other regions. The existing land policy and the political climate prevent people from moving (Ambaye, 2013). With the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) at the political power since the early 1990's, land regulations have in many aspects remained largely unaltered (Sjöstedt, 2008). The state has argued that an open land market, which would allow people to own, sell and buy land, would entail involuntary deprivation of land, which would affect the poor and vulnerable peasants in a negative way (HRW, 2012a). Since the state has declined an open land market, the state can act as the legal owner and decide to lease land without consulting those who occupy it (Deininger et al. 2007).

As shown above, the land regulation has a big impact on locals' access to land. Although the locals can use land, they must fulfil certain requirements in order to keep their access and to avoid having the land redistributed. Even so, if they do fulfil the requirement they still risk being expropriated by the state. Currently the locals lack a legal framework that can protect them from the state's expropriation (HRW, 2012a). As the land regulation also forbids people to sell and exchange land and there are restrictions on land rental and leasing contracts (Ambaye, 2013), locals have limited options when the need for land increases (Bezu and Holden, 2013). Although locals can have access to land, they do not know how long they will be able to utilize it (Gunnarsson and Rojas, 2008). As a result, households choose crops that grow fast and can be harvested in a short time, as a precaution in case they loose access to the land (Bluffstone et al. 2008). Investments in the land and fixed assets are also limited to a minimum, which affects their ability to generate capital (Deininger et al. 2007). In summary, the Ethiopian land regulation has a major impact on local peoples' access to land.

## **4.2 Industrial Development and local people's access to land**

This chapter aim to discuss following question "How does the state-led industrial development project in Omo valley affect locals' access to land?" In order to do so, this section will obtain an understanding of how extensive the industrial development is in the area of Omo valley. The amount of local people depending on access to the land and how their access has been affected by the activity will be discussed.

In order to stimulate industrial development and enhance the economic transformation, significant changes have started to take place in Omo Valley (Ambaye, 2013). The construction of the Gibe III

hydropower project is placed along the Omo River (HRW, 2012c). The Ethiopian state considers the Omo dam project to be of outmost importance in order to modernize the country. It will also extend the state's control over a region with land and water resources (USAID, 2009). Building Africa's highest dam also includes construction of irrigation canals, road infrastructure, 100,000 hectares of commercial agriculture and oil exploration. The Ethiopian Sugar Development Agency is also expanding its business by building ten sugar factories and 245,000 hectares of state-run irrigated sugar plantations in Omo valley. Satellite images, examined by Human Rights Watch, indicate massive changes in the Lower Omo Valley, between November 2010 and January 2013. The large surface which was originally used as pasture land has been removed, along with all vegetation. New roads have been constructed and the irrigation canals intersect the valley (HRW, 2012c).

Although, Ethiopia is said to have major land resources, large parts are already used as cropland and pasture system by families and local communities (Mulligan, 2013). Territories of indigenous and ethnic minorities also comprise large areas (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014). These areas are not legally recognized as their land (Deininger et al. 2007). The area of The Lower Omo valley is a culturally diverse place and the home to around 200,000 people. The area is linked to eight agro-pastoral communities, such as Bodi and Mursi people, which have ancestral connection to the area (HRW, 2014). The Omo River and Valley are linked to their identity and has a key role in providing food security. The extensive development in the area is threatening the communities' way of life. In order to carry through the development of sugar plantations, 150 000 indigenous peoples must move. Without adequate consultation or compensation, the indigenous pastoral communities, have been forced to move from their traditional lands (HRW, 2012c).

Officially, the state has dismissed all the findings that Human Rights Watch have reported and claim that the project area is not near the human habitations and do not interfere with the residents' lifestyle. The state has announced that the sugar plantations will bring benefits to the indigenous populations' in the form of employment. The state concludes that the sugar plantations will create over 150 000 full-time and part-time jobs (HRW, 2012c).

In a report published by United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in 2009, the Ethiopian state is described to neglect and discriminate the Lower Omo's indigenous ethnic groups. The regional administration is claimed to have very little knowledge about the ethnic groups, which often perceive them as un-modern; because of the way they live and dress (USAID, 2009). In a BBC interview with a representative from the Ethiopian Commodity Exchange, the pastoralists and indigenous life is described:

“... at the end of the day, we [do] not really appreciate pastoralists remaining in the forest like this....pastoralism is not sustainable...we must bring commercial farming, mechanized agriculture, to create job opportunities to change the environment” (Oakland Institute, 2011, p.5).

Based on the material displayed, rural people's access to land has been highly affected by the state-led industrial development in Omo valley. Communities' have lost access to ancestral land and their way of life is threatened, for the sake of the industrial development. The state has prioritized the industrial projects, rather than respecting local minorities need for access to the land. Since a large part of Ethiopia is used by families and local communities (Mulligan, 2013), and there are territories of indigenous and ethnic minorities, the forcefully removed groups might face extensive issues finding a new area to settle down on. As a result of the land regulation and the fact that locals lack a legal

framework to protect them from expropriation, locals might have to experience additional problems in keeping access to land.

## **4.3 Villagization and Land-grabbing and local people's access to land**

What has been demonstrated in the previous sections is a very strict land regulation and locals' difficulty in protecting themselves against the state's upper hand, in terms of expropriation and forced removal. In this chapter I will seek to answer following research question "How does the villagization program and land-grab affect locals' access to land?". In order to do so I will discuss the trend of land-grab in Ethiopia and its expansion in rural areas. This section also discusses the villagization program and whether it is an action intended to remove land from local people, for the benefit of large-scale land investments. Firstly, the empirical and historical connection of Villagization Programs will be discussed.

### **4.3.1 Empirical and Historical Connection of Villagization Programs**

The State-led villagization program is not a new concept in Ethiopia; in fact such program was introduced by the military regime "Provisional Military Administrative Council", also known as the Derg, in the 1970's (Ambaye, 2013). At that time it had a disastrous impact on rural population (Deininger et al. 2007). Concerns and scepticism towards the current program have been expressed, which might be due to the devastating impact it had about 25 years ago.

As the Derg seized political power in Ethiopia in 1974, major changes were made in the policy of land ownership (Ambaye, 2013). All rural landless and tenants were given free access to use land. The Derg began a comprehensive agricultural collectivization (Deininger et al. 2007), which included a villagization program. It had the objective of grouping scattered farming communities into small villages of several hundred households each (Ambaye, 2013). The official aim of the villagization was to promote an efficient land use, save resources as well as improve healthcare and infrastructure (HRW, 2012a). The Derg regime, attempted to resettle more than 30 million rural peasants, two-thirds of the total population, into villages over a nine year period (HRW, 2012a). The villagization process was disorganized with threats of violence against those who did not move. Those who resettled described the new villages as camps for forced labour on government projects, such as road construction, agricultural production and other infrastructure development. The villages were in poor condition and thousands of people died of starvation and tropical diseases. In 1986, at least 84 000 people are believed to have fled the settlements while 50 000 became refugees in Somalia. By 1989, the Derg had villagized 13 million people (HRW, 2012a).

Resistance groups against the government arose and violence erupted. Because of shortage of resources and the increasing international condemnation, the state reforms began to drastically slow down (HRW, 2012a). In 1987 the Derg government was dissolved (Ofcansky and LaVerle, 1993) although; by that time the reforms had already had a dramatic impact on the rural population

(Deininger et al. 2007). Practically all areas experienced an uncontrolled growth of squatter shelters with very poor conditions (Sjöstedt, 2008).

In the early 1990's The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) seized political power and remains in power today (HRW, 2012a). Villagization Programs' still takes place and a large number of people have already been resettled in new villages (Sjöstedt, 2008). Concerns have been expressed against the new program by Bertelsmann Stiftung (2014), HRW (2012a) and Cultural Survival Inc (2013), who says that the program has the purpose to clear areas in favour of land-grabbing, leaving local people without access to land or compensation.

#### **4.3.2 The Current Villagization Program**

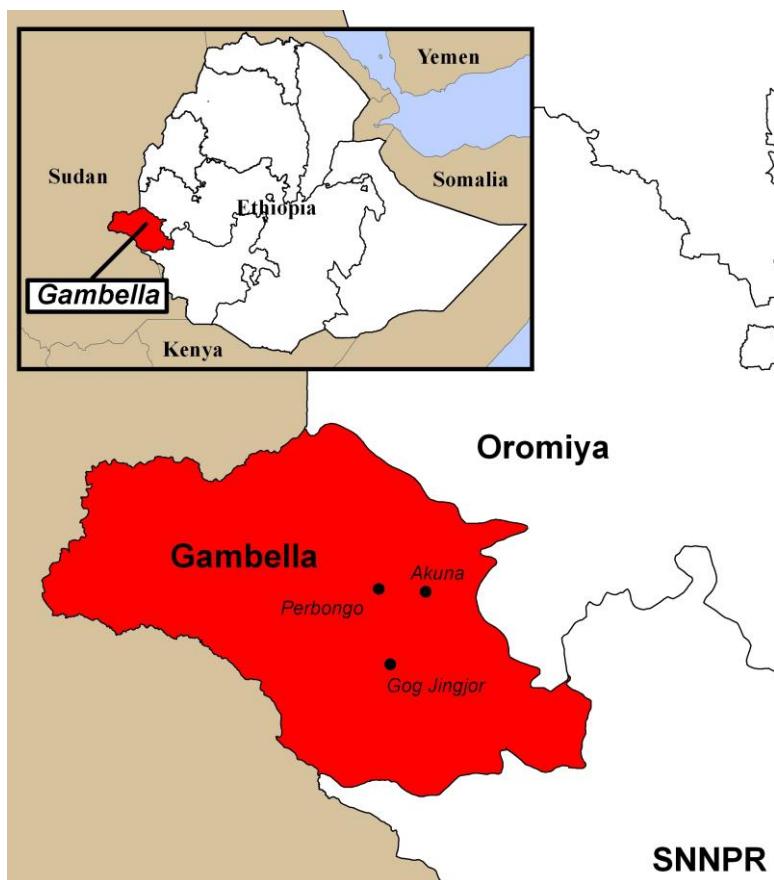
The official aim of the current state-run villagization program is to improve living conditions for rural populations (HRW, 2012a). The program involves bringing basic infrastructure, socio-economic and cultural transformation into newly constructed villages. Resources will be provided that ensures an appropriate transition to secure livelihoods. Such development projects usually involve financial support from organizations like The World Bank, as it is believed to be a strategy that can improve locals' livelihood (Ambaye, 2013). In order to benefit from the developments, communities need to relocate to the new villages. The state claims that moving is optional. So far, the program has been applied in four regions; Gambella, Afar, Somali and Benishangul-Gumuz (HRW, 2012a). The map below illustrates the geographical placement of those regions in Ethiopia.



*Illustration 1: Areas for villagization Gambella, Afar, Somali and Benishangul-Gumuz (Frontline, 2012)*

The program has been questioned and doubts have been expressed regarding its purpose. Media, both Ethiopian and International, have attempted to cover the events taking place in the new villages. However, the state has worked against media monitoring, which has created suspicion towards the program's real purpose. According to the organization Human Rights Watch, one can observe a dramatic increase of foreign large-scale land investments in Gambella, where the villagization is taking place (HRW, 2012a). The state is claimed to have leased land to foreign companies for 99 years

(Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014) and 42 percent of the Gambella area has been used or is planned to be used in land-grabbing (HRW, 2012a). The Gambella region is highlighted in the map below.



*Illustration 2. Gambella, Ethiopia (aaas, 2011)*

There are two different perceptions of the villagization program. Ambaye considers the programme to be a "good example" of clearing land for investment purposes, while also providing locals with electricity, water and health services at the new settlements (Ambaye, 2013). In contrast to Ambaye, several NGO's claim that the program is an action intended to clear areas for the benefit of land-grabbing, leaving locals without access to land or compensation (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014, HRW 2012a, Cultural Survival Inc 2013). According to Bertelsmann Stiftung (2014), as of May 2012 a total of 125,000 households have been cleared from those four areas. The organization Human Rights Watch, concludes that the area most affected by the villagization program is Gambella in western Ethiopia (HRW, 2012a). In a report published by Bertelsmann Stiftung (2014), more than 70,000 indigenous people from the group Anyuaks, have been forcibly removed from Gambella and placed in 18 different camps, following the villagization program. The forced removal of people has been met with violent opposition. However, those who refused to go to the new villages were either killed or jailed (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014). Testimonies claim that most new villages, that are supposed to provide improved living conditions, are in poor conditions and lack water, electricity and health services (Cultural Survival Inc, 2012a). As numerous Anyuaks attempt to leave the camps and return to their home areas, they are informed that the land is used by foreign companies (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014).

#### **4.3.4 Land-grabb and Large-scale investments in Ethiopia**

In order to enhance economic growth and stimulate industrial development, the state has created a tax and legal framework, with very few regulatory requirements (Ambaye, 2013). The favourable arrangements, such as liberal tax and generous investment conditions, are particularly beneficial for investors involved in large-scale land investment (Oakland Institute, 2013). The state has for example offered investors five years of tax exemption, as well as access to land for a low cost (Baumgartner, 2013). Brown concludes that 0,4 hectares of land in Ethiopia can be rented for less than \$ 1 per year (Brown, 2013). Data from the Ethiopian Investment Agency indicates that in 2011 the state identified 3 million hectares, which is approximately the size of Belgium, suitable for investments in large-scale production of food or other crops. More than 4 million hectares of agricultural land has been rented at low rates to companies that set up enormous commercial farms (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014) and over 10 percent of Ethiopia's agricultural area is thought to be utilized by land-grabbing (IFPRI, 2012).

Following the state's generous investment conditions, the internationalization of land investments has grown substantially (Baumgartner, 2013). Ethiopia has attracted significant investments from Saudi Arabia (Woertz, 2013), but most common are investors from industrial countries in Western Europe and North America, as well as the emerging economies in Middle East and South Asia (Baumgartner, 2013). The majority of those land-grabs involve agricultural companies that produce crops such as palm oil, sugar cane, rice and tea for export (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014). In order to simplify the practical process, the state negotiates the contract directly with the investor (Borras and Franco, 2012).

Whether large-scale land investments could bring positive changes to developing countries is a contentious issue. Some claim that the increasing activity will brings opportunities, enhance national income and give locals the ability to improve their income (Woertz, 2013). Another benefit is said to be increasing employment opportunities for locals (Anseeuw et al. 2013). Thus, foreign investments in agriculture could enable local producers to be a part of a supply chain or open up for new jobs.

Baumgartner (2013), notes that the increasing global demand for agricultural products and large-scale land investments can open up for employment opportunities, especially off-farm, which can drastically reduce poverty, among local population. Actors involved in land-grab tend to promise large quantities of jobs, in order to gain support from locals for the land investments (Anseeuw et al. 2013). However, foreign managed plantations do, in general, use imported labour, which can have a negative effect on the local population (Woertz, 2013). It is common that actors involved in land-grabbing announce ambitious investment commitments and large-scale projects in local communities, which they claim will benefit the country's population and rural development (Anseeuw et al. 2013). Nevertheless, research indicates that investors ambitious plans, which are said to benefit rural population, usually do not take place. For instance, in 2008 an Indian business invested in Ethiopia, using 4330 hectares of land. According to the agreement, the company was to use a wide variety of crops, build schools, roads and water reservoirs. Those commitments has as of yet, not been materialized (Anseeuw et al. 2013). On a global scale, the implementation of investors commitments to locals, have generally been uneven. Woertz (2013), claim that it is usually due to lack of infrastructure in rural areas and implications with state's policies.

The land used for large-scale investments are, according to state officials, uninhabited land. As highlighted in a report published by the organisation, Human Rights Watch, a state official explained

that the majority of Ethiopians live on highlands, whereas, land available for foreign investments, are located on the lowland. Furthermore, investors have to dig meters into the ground to get water, while local farmers do not have the technology to do that, which makes the land underutilized (HRW, 2012a). Even so, Brown (2013) claims that Ethiopia's land-grab deals have resulted in forcible relocation of more than one million Ethiopians. Land, such as areas of shifting cultivation and forest, have been taken by investors, with no notice in advance (HRW, 2012a) and access to land has become worse in several regions (DESA, 2009).

The mutual interest in land can increase the risk of conflicts between locals' and the actors involved in land-grabbing (Potts, 2013). One incident that took place in Gambella in April 2012 escalated into violence. On this occasion, Ethiopian people were using a piece of land to grow crops. The state had already used the area in a large-scale investment deal with a company called Saudi Star Agricultural Development, owned by the billionaire Mohammed al-Amoudi. The company was at that time only utilizing 348 hectares of its, approximately, 10 000 hectares. The event sparked a conflict, wounding nine and killing five people. Even so, the Saudi Star Agricultural Development, plans to invest in an area of approximately 290 000 hectares, which will be used to grow rice, with the intention of exporting the majority to Saudi Arabia (Brown, 2013). An Ethiopian man by the name Nyikaw Ochalla, previously lived in a village in the Gambella area (Brown, 2013). Nyikaw Ochalla tells about his experiences of when an Indian company took over his village:

The foreign companies are arriving in large numbers, depriving people of land they have used for centuries. There is no consultation with the indigenous population. The deals are done secretly. The only thing the local people see is people coming with lots of tractors to invade their lands (Brown, 2013, p.24)

Another highlighted agriculture company in Gambella, is Karuturi Global Ltd. This is an India based business which is one of the world's largest rose producers. The company is using land in Gambella to extend its agricultural activity to include crops such as corn, sugarcane and rice, intended for export (Cultural Survival Inc, 2012b). As information became public about locals loosing access to land, due to their large-scale land investments, the financial contributions to Karuturi was reduced and the share value fell. Even so, Karuturi has stated that it will receive funding from an undisclosed government fund and will continue the projects in Ethiopia (Cultural Survival Inc, 2013).

Loosing access to land can also result in lost access to livestock paths and roads to water sites. One study concludes that an investment project in Ethiopia, led to the loss of common property. This had a direct impact on herder's access to essential and strategically located pastures and water points. The consequences were so great that the herders were forced to sell their livestock's (Anseeuw et al. 2013). Land-grab has an impact on how borders are drawn between lands and has affected the size of plots (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014). Since access to land has become more limited in several regions (DESA, 2009), borders between communities and territories among ethnic minorities are changing (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014). Farm plots and boundaries within villages have become more exactly defined and outsider access to resources within communities, are now more guarded (Deininger et al. 2007). Because of the loss of land, ethnic minorities in Gambella have begun to cross other group's territory, which has resulted conflicts and ethnic clashes. As described earlier, more than 70 000 Anyuaks have been forcibly removed from their land in Gambella, following the villagization program (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014). According to the organization Culturalsurvival, Anuak people have tried to defend the land they have lived on. Following violent clashes between the ethnic minorities, Anuak

people have been forced to leave Ethiopia. An increasing number of ethnic minorities now live in refugee camps in Sudan and Kenya (Cultural Survival Inc, 2012a). Areas such as Gambella, Ogaden and Afar are described to be unstable due to conflicts caused by the loss of land (USAID, 2009). As state security forces try to suppress the violence, by creating local alliances that will benefit some parties, violence among ethnic groups are threatening to escalate. Simultaneously, rising population pressure and lack of access to farmland, have mobilized locals to protest against the state (USAID, 2009). An increasing concern is that more land will be made available for large-scale land investments and locals loosing access to land will further increase (Anseeuw et al. 2013).

# 5 Conclusions and Final Remarks

The objective of this thesis was to investigate local people's access to land and explore the impact of the land regulation, state-led industrial development, the villagization program and land-grabbing. The conclusions I draw from the analysis of the material, will be presented in this section.

Firstly, the study suggest that the regulatory framework for land, weakens local people's authority to determine; what land to use, how to use it and for how long they will stay on the land. From a socioeconomic point of view, the land regulation has complications on local's ability to make investments, both in the land and in fixed assets. Investments are limited to a minimum, which affects locals' capacity to generate capital. The risk of loosing access to land also influence local's choice of crops. As shown in a study conducted in the Amhara region, locals tend to grow eucalyptus trees, as they can be harvested in a short amount time. Crops that take a long time to grow and that might generate more capital are avoided by locals due to the risk of not being able to harvest the crops before they are forced to leave the land.

In order to access and utilize the land, locals must comply with certain requirements. However, fulfilling those requirements does not protect locals from forced relocation. The regulation enables the state to take advantage of the country's land resources. Particularly vulnerable are the indigenous groups that live in areas with agricultural land and where the interests for land have increased. For the state to have access to certain land they have removed locals, using methods such as expropriation, redistribution of land and forceful removal through the villagization programme. There is no legal framework that can protect locals from any of those processes. Furthermore, the study demonstrates that access to land has worsened in several regions and land used by locals' has been confiscated.

It is disturbing that major areas of land are made available for land-grabbing, while the local population is losing their means of income. The state argues that the foreign agricultural production will contribute to long-term food security, since technology will be transferred to small-scale agriculture. How or when this will take place is still unknown. From a development perspective, the land regulation could be considered to limit locals' ability to enhance small-scale agricultural production. As people are forced to limit their investments in land, there is probably little chance of an increase in small-scale production. Perhaps the land regulation can be regarded as a way to keep people in poverty.

Given peoples loss of land access, it has already erupted conflicts in some areas where land-grab takes place. Another cause of concern is the predicted population growth, which will occur in developing countries. In addition the increasing demand for food globally, is likely to increase land-grab even more. These problematic trends could have major consequences for the Ethiopian population and lead to further difficulties in the future.

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